

PHIL 335: Power and Oppression

Winter Term I (Fall 2016)
MWF 12-1
Hugh Dempster Pavilion 301

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Office Hours: Wednesdays 2-4 in Buchanan E163

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Connect Course Site: <http://elearning.ubc.ca/connect>

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Description

This course examines philosophical theories of power and oppression. We begin with conceptual foundations, asking what liberty means, why it might be valuable, and how it relates to the concept of power. In the second part of the course we drill down into various different modes of power—state power, economic power, psychological power, bodily power, conceptual power—in order to get a better sense of how they shape our lives. In the third and final part of the course we briefly consider forms of resistance to power and oppression. We will read a variety of contemporary philosophers and political theorists as well as nineteenth- and twentieth-century authors such as Marx and Engels, Weber, Fanon, Marcuse, Arendt, Foucault and Havel.

The course will help you develop your ability to make and evaluate arguments, both in writing and in conversation, and thereby help you think clearly and critically about power and oppression. But this course will not address every question concerning power and oppression. This is a course in philosophy rather than sociology, political science, or gender and race studies; although our discussions will touch on those other disciplines, they will tend to be rather abstract in character.

Texts

The University Bookstore will have copies of each of these books soon. The rest of the readings will be available online via the UBC Connect site. Please bring a copy of the relevant readings to each class.

David Miller (ed.), *The Liberty Reader*

Steven Lukes, *Power: A Radical View*

Michael Rosen, *On Voluntary Servitude: False Consciousness and the Theory of Ideology*

Nina Power, *One-Dimensional Woman*

Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*

Course Evaluation

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|--------------------|-----|
| Group Exercises | 10% |
| 1 Two-page Paper | 15% |
| 2 Four-page Papers | 40% |
| Final Exam | 35% |

Marking Scale

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|------------|----------|-----------|
| 90-100% A+ | 85-89% A | 80-84% A- |
| 76-79% B+ | 72-75% B | 68-71% B- |
| 64-67% C+ | 60-63% C | 55-59% C- |
| 50-54% D | 0-49% F | |

Group Exercises

On Fridays we will have discussions in class. To get these going, we will regularly break into small groups to complete an exercise. Each member of a given group who is present will receive the same mark on the assignment.

Papers

Each student is required to write three papers; the first will roughly two pages (double spaced), while the second and third will be roughly four pages (double spaced). You should bring a printed copy of each paper to class on the relevant day. Late papers are marked down 5% per day late, with the first day beginning directly after class. Only physical copies will be accepted, barring exceptional circumstances.

Final Exam

Each student is required to take the final examination, which is designed to test your comprehension of the material covered in class and in the readings. It will probably consist of a combination of short answer and essay questions.

Other Requirements

Attendance at each class is required of all students. If you miss a class during which a group exercise takes place, you will receive a “O” for that assignment. You should arrive at class having read and thought about the material, ready to ask questions and respond if called upon. During class you should take notes, preferably by hand, and at the end of each class you should make a note of anything that remains unclear to you. This will help you prepare for the discussion session.

If you have any questions or concerns about the way class is being conducted, or if you would like to discuss the material further, please come to my office hours. If you have a disability that prevents you from fully demonstrating your abilities, please contact me as soon as possible so that we can discuss how to ensure your full participation and facilitate your educational opportunities.

Finally, please note that cheating and plagiarism will result in an “F” for the course. If you have any doubt as to what constitutes academic misconduct, please check with me or consult the University’s guidelines.

Part One: Conceptual and Normative Foundations

- 9/7 Iris Marion Young, "Five Faces of Oppression"
9/9 Sally Haslanger, "Oppressions, Racial and Other"

9/12 Max Weber, "Class, Status, Party"
9/14 Steven Lukes, *Power: A Radical View*
9/16 RECAP/DISCUSSION

9/19 Isaiah Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty"
9/21 Philip Pettit, "Freedom as Antipower"
9/23 RECAP/DISCUSSION

9/26 Onora O'Neill, "Agency and Autonomy"
9/28 Thomas Hurka, "Why Value Autonomy?"
9/30 RECAP/DISCUSSION & **FIRST PAPER DUE**

Part Two: Coercion, Exploitation and Domination

- 10/3 A. John Simmons, "Philosophical Anarchism"
10/5 Niko Kolodny, "Political Rule and Its Discontents"
10/7 RECAP/DISCUSSION

10/10 THANKSGIVING – NO CLASS
10/12 Robert Nozick, "Distributive Justice"
10/14 G. A. Cohen, "Capitalism, Freedom, and the Proletariat"

10/17 Alan Wertheimer, "Remarks on Coercion and Exploitation"
10/19 Mikhail Valdman, "A Theory of Wrongful Exploitation"
10/21 RECAP/DISCUSSION

10/24 Scott Anderson, "Prostitution and Sexual Autonomy"
10/26 Elizabeth Anderson, "Equality and Freedom in the Workplace"
10/28 RECAP/DISCUSSION

Part Three: Internalized Oppression

- 10/31 Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, "The German Ideology"
11/2 Michael Rosen, *On Voluntary Servitude*, chs. 2 and 8
11/4 RECAP/DISCUSSION & **SECOND PAPER DUE**

- 11/7 Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man*, ch.1
11/9 Nina Power, *One-Dimensional Woman*
11/11 REMEMBRANCE DAY – NO CLASS
- 11/14 Frantz Fanon, “The Fact of Blackness”
11/16 Sally Haslanger, “Ideology, Generics, and Common Ground”
11/18 RECAP/DISCUSSION
- 11/21 Michel Foucault, “Panopticism”, in *Discipline and Punish*

Part Three: Modes of Resistance

- 11/23 Michel Foucault, “The Subject and Power”
11/25 RECAP/DISCUSSION
- 11/28 Vaclav Havel, “The Power of the Powerless”, Sections I-IV, VI-IX, XV
11/30 Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 199-207
12/2 RECAP/DISCUSSION & **THIRD PAPER DUE**
- TBA FINAL EXAM**